



## FALL CLEAN WATER TIPS KEEP YOUR STORM DRAIN FREE OF LITTER AND LEAVES

Some tips to protect our valuable water resources include:

- Rake or sweep leaves and grass from streets, driveways and sidewalks. Never dispose of leaves or grass clippings along shore land or in wetlands.
- If leaves are less than two inches thick on your lawn, consider mulching them by making several passes with a power mower. Your lawn will look raked and the shredded leaves will provide nutrients for your lawn.
- Use fertilizers and pesticides only as needed. Always read and follow product instructions.
- Consider using alternative lawn-care techniques. Pull weeds by hand or spot-treat weedy areas instead of your entire yard.
- Be conscious of phosphorus. Minnesota's Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law requires use of phosphorus-free fertilizer on lawns unless soil testing shows a need for it.

**These common pollutants wash off yards and streets into storm sewers and pollute our water bodies:**

- *Phosphorus* from tree leaves, grass clippings, fertilizer and pet waste.
- *Eroding soil* from exposed soil on construction sites and sparse lawns.
- *Bacteria* from pet and wildlife waste or failing septic systems.
- *Toxins* from oil, paint, cleaners, etc., spilled onto streets and driveways.

For more information, visit [www.cleanwatermn.org](http://www.cleanwatermn.org).

## DID YOU KNOW? LIGHTING THE WAY TO SUSTAINABILITY



IN 2001, TRAFFIC Maintenance began swapping more than 700 red bulbs and arrows in City-owned stoplights with new energy-efficient bulbs that save resources and money. Today, more than 70 percent of all of the City's signals (red, yellow and green) are LEDs.

These LEDs or light-emitting diodes, last from five to 10 years longer than incandescent bulbs, which last only about one year. Safety increases because the brighter LEDs are more visible and there is less bulb burnout. In addition, LEDs use only one-sixth as much electricity as the old bulbs, which means big energy cost savings. For more information, call Traffic Maintenance at 952-563-4585.

*Earth Action Heroes protect the earth. Whether it's saving energy or guarding Bloomington's precious natural resources, these individuals are making a difference. Here are your neighbors in action ...*

## EARTH ACTION HEROES BACKYARD BUCKTHORN ELIMINATORS



### BUCKTHORN BUST

Volunteers are needed to participate in a buckthorn removal event, **Saturday, October 27, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.** at Pond Dakota Mission Park, 401 E. 104th St.

For information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8877 or e-mail [parksrec@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:parksrec@ci.bloomington.mn.us).

themselves about the noxious shrub by talking to their neighbors and gathering information at an environmental fair, held by the City in February. They soon learned what they must do – remove the buckthorn, roots and all. Cutting the shrub/tree is only a temporary solution. Seeds remain viable in the ground for up to six years. Saplings need to be removed each year.

Smaller buckthorn can be removed by hand or by weed wrench. If the buckthorn is too overgrown, as was the case with the Christenson's yard that contained some buckthorn trees 20 feet high, it may be necessary to enlist the help of a landscaper or tree contractor.

Now that the Christensons have had their buckthorn professionally removed, they couldn't be happier.

"A lot of people don't want to mess with their yards, but if you want to plant anything or if you want more space, you need to get rid of it," said Pat Christenson.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the City of Bloomington encourage buckthorn removal.

"The City is happy to see residents removing buckthorn from their yards, as so many open spaces are being overtaken by buckthorn," said Public Works Maintenance Project Coordinator Jean Buckley. "We can only control its spread when people take small steps to remove it in their own backyard."

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH BUCKTHORN?

- Competes with native plants for light, moisture and nutrients.
- Forms an impenetrable thicket.
- Destroys wildlife habitat.
- Bears fruit that stains cars, decks and concrete, and contains a laxative that causes birds to deposit undigested seeds, thus spreading more buckthorn.

INTRODUCED TO NORTH AMERICA FROM Europe in the 1800s, common and glossy buckthorn are extremely invasive shrubs that sap light, moisture and nutrients from neighboring plants and trees.

The measures one Bloomington couple took to rid their yard overgrown with buckthorn may seem extreme, but necessary, as buckthorn forms an impenetrable thicket that prevents gardens and trees from thriving.

When Vern and Pat Christenson decided they wanted to re-landscape their Beard Avenue home, they contacted local landscaping companies. They found they were hearing the same thing over and over.

"We were told to first remove all the buckthorn or nothing would grow," said Pat Christenson.

The Christensons educated

### IDENTIFYING BUCKTHORN

For help identifying buckthorn, ask someone at your local garden center, call the City at 952-563-8760, or visit our Web site at [www.ci.bloomington.mn.us](http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us), keyword: Buckthorn.



Glossy or adler buckthorn



Common buckthorn

### WEED WRENCHES GET THE JOB DONE RIGHT

Weed Wrenches are often used remove roots from the ground, preventing the invasive plant from returning. The City has Weed Wrenches available for loan. For more information, call Jean Buckley at 952-563-8751.

## RECYCLE THE OLD RECYCLING RULES!

REMEMBER THESE RECYCLING TIPS:

- Packages for refrigerated and microwaveable products such as frozen entrees are usually coated in ways that make them unacceptable for recycling. However, boxes from items meant to go in your cupboard (e.g. cereal and cracker boxes) are recyclable.



- Twin City metro area residents recycle almost one million pounds of paper every day, but there is much more that can be recycled.
- Recycling paper doesn't just save trees. Production of recycled paper uses 80 percent less water, 65 percent less energy and produces 95 percent less air pollution than paper production using raw materials.



- Some people don't recycle mail because they are concerned about protecting their identity. Mail and other papers are no safer in the trash. If you shred your paper, you can still recycle it. Place it in a closed paper bag and label it "shredded paper."



◀ Previous

Index

Next ▶

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING, OCTOBER 2007